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Effort is made to explain some of the difficulties Mexican immigrant families face in becoming acculturated. Mexican traditions and customs, and changes encountered in the United States are reviewed indicating the effect of migration on the family unit. Discussion includes family life in Mexico with emphasis on the status of Mexican women, family life in a different culture, the Mexican in U.S. and California agriculture, the California farm labor situation, and legislation affecting the farm worker. Employment opportunities, health and welfare services, fringe benefits, and housing are topics considered in presenting present and future needs of California's farm workers. Educational problems and educational needs of the Mexican American are pointed out in concluding sections. (SW)

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CONFLICTS OF CULTURAL TRANSITION

A Review of Dilemmas Faced by the Mexican-American Farm Worker and His Family

ROBERT F. BARNES

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CONFLICTS OF CULTURAL TRANSITION:

A Review of Dilemmas Faced By

The Mexican Farm Worker and His Family

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CONFLICTS OF CULTURAL TRANSITION:

A Review of Dilemmas Faced by The Mexican Farm Worker and His Family

Robert F. Barnes

The history and development of the Southwest and California were influenced largely by Spaniards and, later, Mexicans, through discovery, exploration, settlement, and establishment of a traditional culture. The families of these early settlers changed with the economic and political growth of the United States. Today many of their descendants are influential members of middle- and upper-class society. Acculturation apparently posed no great problem for these people, possibly because they were associating with "gringos" (Anglos) from the Eastern United States who themselves were being forced to adapt to a new culture.

As this agrarian society and its agriculture developed in the Southwest and California, more and more Mexicans began looking to these areas as their "land of opportunity." As the need for farm labor increased, so did the number of Mexicans crossing the border--on work permits, as braceros, and illegally. Normally they would leave their families behind and earn enough money to support those families throughout the rest of the year.

An increasing number of these workers began bringing their families and establishing permanent residence in the United States. With this phenomenon began the slow but painful process of acculturation. The first-generation families had, and continue to have, a difficult time making such a cultural shift. Mexicans are the slowest immigrant group to

become assimilated into the majority culture (18). This slow rate is generally attributed to the traditional role of the family in Mexican life and to the status of Mexican women and their roles as mother and wife. To understand the difficulties that the Mexican faces in becoming acculturated, one must explore not only his traditions and customs but also the changes he encounters in the United States and the effect of this migration on the family unit.

Family Life in Mexico

In the traditional Mexican culture, in all classes, the family is the focus of social identification and also a sanctuary in a hostile world (14). Most of the three million Mexican immigrants and their descendants are described as being Mestizos (a mixture of Spanish and Indian), from poor rural villages, poorly educated, at least nominally Catholic, and without special skills. They are members of a "folk culture", i.e., one that is distinguished by a common body of tradition passed orally from generation to generation (2, 19). This tradition is designed to govern every action of the individual from birth to death.

This typical family consists of a network of relationships characterized by much mutual aid and cooperation. Family members are all persons connected by birth or marriage. Also, it is customary for parents to ask friends to serve as godparents to a child, a request that is more than an honorary position, for it entails many obligations and privileges. Ideally, godparents of a Mexican child serve as a second set of parents to whom he can go for help or advice.

Mexico is a man's world -- a true patriarchy. The family head is the Male, demanding unquestioning respect and loyalty from his wife and children. An unmarried woman is virtually a social outcast, and it is

socially acceptable for a husband to desert or divorce a barren wife--this in a country where divorce is almost unheard of.

As a youngster, the female is trained by adult females in the family for her role of wife and mother. Her total activities are oriented to the home and family. Her preparation for this role is based on three traditional values: 1) the mother is the family affectional figure; 2) children are submissive and obedient to the will of their father and/or other authority figures; and 3) males are accorded higher status than females. One authority makes the following observation of the Mexican female:

> ".....she is seldom permited to forget her status as a mother, which is expected to take precedence over her status as daughter, wife and sweetheart. Women, in their status positions as mothers, seem to be the fulcrum around which many anxieties are held in rather delicate balance. They are expected to mediate between religious and familial institutions and thereby keep all family members in ritual rectitude. Women prepare the foods, they further perpetuate knowledge of cures, as well as beliefs and attitudes toward health" (13).

Division of labor is clearly defined, with the women responsible for and restricted to household duties except in case of dire emergency or in jobs such as hauling water or repairing the house. She is expected to ask her husband's advice and permission before venturing out of the house, and she is not to be curious about or jealous of his "outside" activities. In the traditional Mexican family, husbands usually forbid their wives to befriend women outside the family, since they consider such women as potential "go-betweens" for the wife and a possible lover.

The Mexican wife can best be typified as 'virtuous, pure, Virgin-of-Guadalupe' women, secure with her children within the circle of her family. While she is expected to be subservient to and dominated by her husband, she may use her role as primary socializing agent (p.s.a.) to exercise

some control over her husband through the children (13). As primary socializing agent, she is closer to her children than the father, and the death of the mother is generally more disruptive to the family than the death of the father. The mother shows more affection to the children, and even though she is closer to her daughters she is more likely to punish them than her sons.

The oldest male wage-earner is traditionally recognized as the head of the Mexican family. As such, he is responsible for the support of the family, the behavior of all family members, and all major decisions affecting the family. In this role he may have control over several households of married sons and even younger married brothers and their children. Each male head of a household, even though he may not be head of the family, has a great deal more status than the average middle-class Anglo male can ever expect to acquire. He has the freedom to come and go as he pleases, he is expected to do work only outside the home, he demands unquestioning loyalty and respect from his wife and children, and he expects his wife and female children to be totally submissive and faithful.

Male children learn early that they are living in a "man's" world. Beginning in early childhood they have a great deal more freedom than do their sisters, and as they get older, they are given even more freedom to come and go as they please, answering only to their fathers or the head of the family. Quite early in their lives they are allowed to seek companionship outside the circle of their extended family, a privilege not enjoyed by their female siblings. If school is available, the male children are much more likely to complete it than are their sisters, who, if they have been allowed to attend at all, are removed from school because of the 'danger' to their chastity and purity.

In early childhood, Mexican children's lives revolve primarily around their mother. If she ever leaves them alone, it is with a relative. From her they learn the patterns of their culture, their good habits and behavior, and their earliest knowledge of religion. They are constantly reminded by their mother and relatives to respect their father. They are less consistent in their behavior toward their mother, reflecting the inconsistencies of her role in the family. She is both punishing and protective, authoritative and submissive, servile and demanding. They soon learn, too, that it is permissible for the mother, though never the father, to provide physical affection, and in some instances she serves as a buffer between them and the father (12).

Recent studies of Mexican culture have revealed some changes taking place in family patterns (12). One of the more recent and probably more profound changes is a increase in child-orientedness on the part of both parents. It has also been noted that parents in Mexico are tending to be more permissive and more demonstratively affectionate toward their young children -- almost a complete about-face from the past.

Family Life in a Different Culture

The impact of the Anglo culture on the Mestizo immigrant may be relatively slight; he may spend the majority of his life in the United States without learning more than a few basic words of English. His children, however, cannot escape the results of having different cultural values. Once he has made the move, he and his family must make the difficult decision as to whether to cling to old, well-known customs or to adopt those of the new culture. Regardless of the decision, certain changes in family life are dictated by the new culture and other changes occur as

assimilation progresses.

The first change the Mexican family must accept, and possible one of the most difficult, is the abrupt change from the extended family to the small, self-sustaining nuclear family unit. Consanguineal ties are difficult to break, but they are loosened with the move to the United States and are further weakened if the family enters into the stream of the migrant farm worker. That these ties are soon broken is borne out in a report showing that the concern of married brothers and sisters for distant relatives as well as for close family members traveling with them is almost nonexistent. In many instances they expressed the opinion they could not afford to help their relatives even in time of severe distress of disaster (13).

Mexican-Americans in California are predominantly farm workers, but increasing numbers are becoming urbanized as agricultural employment opportunities decrease. Employment is sought in other industries. In the Central Valley, Mexican-Americans are either the only or the most numerous minority group in most communities. The fact that these people are employed primarily in seasonal work necessitates frequent moves to maintain a reasonable level of employment. This mobility, coupled with the accompanying insecurity and poor living conditions due to low income, inevitably has a disastrous effect on family life. The unfavorable economic conditions faced by most Mexican-Americans force them to live in areas where rents are low, and many times they are compelled to keep roomers. The presence of such outsiders in the home and the undesirable living conditions have a deteriorating effect on the family life style (11).

Although entrance into the 'migrant stream' causes a considerable change in the values and mores held by the Mexican family, the values and

traditions that are considered sacred or necessary to the well-being of the individual and the society tend to be preserved as long as possible. Examples are death rites, the traditional relation between sexes, marriage, and family life (11). The order in which these values generally succumb are the relations between sexes, marriage, family life, and, lastly, death rites.

American public coeducation has dealt a blow to parental sheltering of girls, and American attitudes toward the status of women have tended to undermine male superiority in the Mexican family. Although the wife may, and usually does, remain subordinate to her husband, the children, both male and female, are reasonably emancipated. In many families the eldest son may even supersede his father as mentor and protector of the younger children because of his ability to speak English and experience with American culture in the schools. Older daughters, particularly those employed, are much less subservient to their father than is their mother, and many completely refuse to accept a subordinate role when they marry.

The unskilled father, many times, finds his status declining because of extended periods of unemployment. This is particularly true in the 'miltivocational' and 'migratory' families (17). In the multivocational family, one usually finds all the older children and the father working while the mother stays home and cares for the young. She also is the bookkeeper, receiving the family's wages, buying food, and making payments and financial arrangements. In the migratory family, the parents have similar roles. However, this family work unit is almost invariably working in agriculture rather than being employed in several industries. The pattern of the migrant family is changing in that more of the mothers are going into the fields with the family or are seeking employment in canneries

or similar agricultural industries (16). Children of these families have little opportunity to pursue school beyond the legal age limit, if that long. Another factor influencing the migrant child's school opportunities is the fact that over half of them miss either the beginning of the school year, the end of the school year, or both because of the family's travel patterns in following the crops (1).

The Mexican in the U.S. and California Agriculture

Although Mexicans have crossed the border to work in the United States fields for decades, the most publicized segment of Mexican farm workers has been the bracero -- "strong-armed ones"--who were the bulk of farm workers in California from about 1942 through 1964. The bracero program, importation of Mexican nationals to work under contract on a short-term basis, was established in 1942 through executive agreement between the United States and Mexico as a result of severe manpower shortages caused by World War II. The termination of hostilities saw a decline in the number of braceros used, but the program was continued. The Korean War again brought about farm labor shortages and another increase in the number of braceros. In July 1951, Congress passed Public Law 78, and in August the Migrant Labor Agreement between the U.S. and Mexico was finalized, authorizing continued importation of braceros. Following 1951, Congress extended PL 78 a number of times for limited duration. Finally, in 1963, Congress voted against further extension, allowing PL 78 to terminate. Since December 1964 (termination date), braceros have been used in California to a limited extent and at the pleasure of the Department of Labor. In order for a grower to import braceros, he must prove to the Department of Labor that he has exhausted all existing supplies of farm labor and still needs additional help.

Another method of entry into the United States for the Mexican national was created by passage of the McCarran-Walter Act in 1952 (PL 414). Under this law, nationals may enter the United States to work only after a request has been made by an employer. This immigrant (green card) has residence rights up to three years, with the ultimate possibility of citizenship. The permits are issued for a maximum of six months, however, whereupon they can be renewed for succeeding six-month periods to the maximum. In 1963, the last year of P.L. 78, it was estimated that between 32,000 and 38,000 "green cards" were employed in California agriculture. This does not, however, give the true picture of the number of "green cards" living in the state, since many who entered as agricultural workers have moved to other industries. "Green cards" live in all areas of the state, although some of them (as well as some U.S. citizens) live in Mexico and enter California for daily employment.

The third means of entry into the United States is illegal entry -- "wetbacks" -- so-called because they originally either swam or waded the Rio Grande River. A 1954 estimate indicated that some 1,100,000 "wetbacks" entered the United States in that year to seek employment, primarily in agriculture. This number is more than twice the number of braceros imported during the same year. About one-third of these illegal entries were apprehended and deported. Available deportation figures show the number of "wetbacks" entering decreased markedly between 1954 and 1964. Most authorities attribute this decrease to the larger numbers admitted under PL 78 and PL 414. Although no estimates are available on illegal entries over the past three years, it must be assumed that the number declined with a decrease in the number of Mexican Nationals employed.

California Farm Labor Situation

The most recent statistics from the California Department of Employment indicate that farm labor is composed of three groups: full-time employed workers; owner-operator and unpaid family; local, seasonally employed; migrant, seasonally employed; and foreign contract workers. Each of the first three categories makes up about 30 percent of the total farm labor force in California. The seasonally employed migrant group represents almost ten percent while the foreign contract group makes up less than one percent. Of the total farm labor force in the state, it is estimated that less than ten percent can be classified as Mexican Nationals.

The most obvious reason for the decrease in the number of Nationals employed is the termination of the bracero program. Two other factors that have most certainly had some influence on this decrease are increased mechanization of farming operations and greater pressure from labor unions attempting to organize farm workers in the Central Valley.

Termination of the bracero program led agriculture to make many dire predictions of gross labor shortages, unharvested crops rotting in the fields, and destruction of the agricultural economy in California. Many persons believed that mechanical harvesting techniques were too far in the future to save the situation. Nevertheless, even though the 1965 labor situation was chaotic, history shows that agriculture survived and that many operations were mechanized quite rapidly.

Mechanical harvesting of many crops has eliminated several hand operations, but it has also created a number of new jobs. The tomato harvester, for instance, has decreased the number of hand workers between the field and cannery by about 30 percent. While tomato harvesters have displaced many field workers, they also have provided new jobs -- sorters,

tractor drivers, fork-lift operators, etc. -- demanding skills that differ from those in hand harvesting. This factor has had a great impact on the number of unskilled Nationals employed in farm labor.

The number of Nationals employed has also been markedly affected by the entry of labor unions into the farm labor picture. First, unions are attempting to organize farm workers so they are fighting for employment of more domestics. Unions accuse growers of importing nationals as a means of preventing unionization, for the nationals seem to be more skeptical than are domestics about the value of unions. This skepticism seems to arise from lack of understanding of the value of unions by the nationals, and from their fear of becoming involved in strikes which they feel they cannot afford (1). More and more Nationals appear to be avoiding areas of strong union activity, preferring other quieter areas.

Legislation and the Farm Worker

The Congressional action in not renewing PL 78 was one of the more significant pieces of legislation for domestic and "green card" farm workers in the past ten years. That action increased the number of jobs for domestics and "green cards" by 25,000 to 45,000 according to various estimates.

Another piece of legislation beneficial for farm workers was the Economic Opportunity Act (EOA) of 1964. From this act have come programs which have given farm workers: 1) temporary migrant-family housing; 2) self-help housing for seasonally employed local families; 3) year-round educational programs for adults; 4) day care centers for young children of working parents and 5) legal assistance through establishment of the California Rural Legal Aid (CRLA) program.

Of all the EOA programs, the temporary housing program has probably been the most beneficial for the migrant farm family. The program has vastly improved housing and general living conditions for these families. At this writing over 25 such housing centers (40 to 100 units per center) have been built with several more approved for construction during the coming season. These centers not only provide adequate, though still substandard housing, but also offer child care facilities for children aged two through five, evening adult classes, and (in some cases) recreation for older children in the camp (4).

The self-help housing program is just becoming established, but is rapidly gaining acceptance. It provides an opportunity for poor farm workers to own a home that far exceeds their past expectations. This program is financed through the Farmers Home Administration (FHA).

In some areas of the Central Valley, EOA funds are being used to establish year-round adult education programs. These programs consist of a stipend program during periods of minimum employment and a voluntary nonstipend program during peak employment periods. These programs are designed to meet the educational needs of farm workers from basic education through training in vocational skills.

The CRLA provides legal assistance for possibly the largest disenfranchised group in California, the Mexican farm workers. Through CRLA, farm workers and their families have assurance, never enjoyed before, that legal advice or assistance is available when needed. However, this program has not been at all popular with groups and individuals, who in the past, have taken advantage of farm workers because the workers had no recourse.

Funds provided through Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965 have been made available to school districts to set up special summer programs for school-age children of farm workers. For the most part, these programs are offered at the elementary level, because older children are usually working in the field. The experiences gained through these programs should be of great value, in view of the fact that many of these children miss segments of the school year in their home schools.

In some communities, AB 1331 (the Unruh bill) makes funds available for preschool programs that can be directed toward children of farm workers. These programs are designed specifically for poverty areas; families of the children must be certified by the Department of Public Welfare, with preference given to children whose parents speak a foreign language. Participation of parents in adult classes in conjunction with the preschool program is definitely encouraged, though not required.

In California, farm workers have recently been included in the Industrial Disability Insurance program. They are now also eligible for Social Security and most employers do withhold workers' contributions to both programs. There are still instances however where investigations have revealed employers withhold these monies and do not report them. This practice appears most prevalent where workers are employed on a daily basis and paid in cash at the end of the working day.

Despite the help received from legislation to date, farm workers still need help in other areas, many believe, although passage of necessary legislation has been blocked. One of these areas is the inclusion of farm workers in the Unemployment Insurance program. Another is the attempt by organized labor to obtain legislation that would include farm workers with other industrial workers under the National Labor Relations Act.

The current political climate indicates that neither of these pieces of legislation will become a reality in the near future. This attitude is reflected in an injunction obtained by grower representatives against a California Industrial Relations Council recommendation that minimum wages for women and children in agriculture be raised to $1.75 per hour. Although a lower court found in favor of the Council ruling, it was necessary to go through several appeals before the ruling became effective retroactive to the original date of passage.

With recent legislation providing funds for programs designed to improve the lot of farm workers, and increased interest being shown by organized labor, the federal government, and many public and private organizations, it may appear to the casual observer that farm workers "never had it so good." That is true, but the need is great for continued support, improvement and upgrading of existing programs, and creation of new programs.

Programs created by the previously mentioned legislation are not maximally effective. They have been unable to reach even a majority of farm workers--for a variety of reasons: inadequate and/or inappropriately trained staff, rigid and/or unrealistic guidelines established by the enabling legislation, the mobility of the population to be served, poor cooperation between and among agencies, professional jealousy, lack of awareness of those to be served, etc.

Existing agencies such as Public Welfare, Employment Service, Agricultural Extension Service, Public Education, and others are becoming involved in programs for farm workers or are at least expressing interest in becoming involved. Those already involved have shown little effectiveness in solving the problems of farm workers. Much of this can be attributed to agency regulations and rigidity, recipient mobility, long

working hours of the recipients, lack of knowledge of services available, inability of potential recipients to cope with agency "red tape," a general fear of public agencies and officials, staff not appropriately trained to work with low income persons in general and farm workers in particular, and a prevailing attitude of many administrators in such agencies that "We're doing the best we can with what we have and if we can't get to everyone, don't worry, someone else will take care of them." Probably the greatest need in existing agencies is for a sound in-service training program for staff and administrators plus a vigorous move to provide genuine flexibility of rules and regulations governing programs that could be of help to farm workers.

The Future for California Farm Workers

The preceding sections have pointed out the problems facing farm workers, their causes, and some attempts to solve those problems in California. The reader must bear in mind the bulk of these workers are of Mexican descent, and hence a minority as to both ethnic heritage and occupation. This worker finds his problems compounded by belonging to two forgotten groups--a racial minority and the rural poor.

To make a more clear appraisal of what this writer foresees for the future of the farm worker in California, this paper treats separately each factor appearing to contribute to the total picture. It deals in depth only with those factors that today's society appears capable of resolving.

Housing:

Despite the great deal that appears to have been done for farm workers in improved housing, much of the progress has been limited to improved housing for migrant farm workers. Indeed this housing is

'much better than the river bank,' but it is still substandard, and present efforts appear to be directed toward constructing more of the same. Little consideration is being given to developing low-cost permanent housing in rural areas for migrant farm workers, or developing a realistic long-range plan for improving housing of the seasonally employed local farm worker.

Local housing authorities and other agencies concerned with providing adequate housing must stop thinking and planning only in terms of short-term stop-gap measures to meet the needs of a particular group currently in the 'public eye.' They must begin making such emergency measures an integral part of sound long-range plans. One of the best examples in the Central Valley is The Merced County Housing Authority. In developing emergency housing for migrant farm workers they so arranged concrete slabs for temporary units that in the future these slabs can become part of the floor of a two family permanent housing unit. All plumbing and wiring to temporary units meets the minimum standards of the county housing code for permanent housing. Thus, a part of the funds expended for temporary housing is used to decrease the cost of permanent, standard housing that will become available to farm workers in the area in the future (15).

Health and Welfare Services:

Progress in health services for farm workers and their families is as great as in any area of service. During the past two years, several counties have set up evening clinics at housing centers for farm workers. Generally, these clinics are reasonably well staffed and are open at the times when needed. However, workers not living in the camps must seek medical service from private clinics and county hospitals.

Generally, complaints heard are to the effect that private clinics are too expensive; that personnel are likely to discourage farm workers from using the clinics; or no one in the clinic speaks Spanish. Common complaints about county hospitals are: waiting periods are extremely long, hence a worker is likely to return to the fields; if his illness is not disabling; they are not open when the workers can use them; the staff is rude and impatient; sometimes no one in the clinic speaks Spanish; there are no women doctors to treat women patients; hospitals are too far away and there is no one available to take the person needing treatment without losing time in the field.

Further improvement of health services for farm workers appears to depend on a minimum of four major factors: 1) intensive in-service training by medical schools and related agencies, to change the attitudes of persons in public health toward the clientele they serve; 2) more emphasis on training Spanish-speaking para-professionals to work in public-health facilities that serve farm workers and their families; 3) more flexibility in setting operating hours of health facilities; and 4) use of mobile clinics in the fields at least during periods of peak employment.

Welfare services for farm workers have improved somewhat in recent years, but progress is painfully slow. The winter of 1966 showed that one of the greatest problems is the residency requirement. Other areas compounding this problem are large case loads, complex investigative procedures, language barriers, and lack of knowledge by potential recipients as to exactly when and how they may become eligible for assistance.

Some recommended remedial actions include: 1) using trained Spanish-speaking para-professionals to make investigations and recommend necessary action to the professional staff; 2) relaxation of residence requirements in time of severe need and a general 'over-haul' of all residence require-

ments; and 3) in-service training to acquaint staff and administration with the needs of rural poor.

Fringe Benefits:

Farm workers were recognized as industrial personnel when their minimum-wage policies were placed under the jurisdiction of the California Industrial Relations Commission. As such, their minimum wages are set in the same manner as are those of any other industrial workers. Even so, fringe benefits comparable to other industries are almost non-existent. Except with a few large Growers' Associations farm workers do not have available any organized program of health insurance, unemployment insurance, and other fringe benefits. In addition, many workers, being unaware of the benefits that are available to them, do not take advantage of them.

Much effort must be expended during the coming years to gain needed fringe benefits for farm workers. It must be pointed out that many traditional fringe benefits enjoyed by other workers are probably unrealistic for the farm workers, and in some instances are not wanted by them. All the same, the basic benefits of unemployment insurance and health insurance are needed now. Unemployment insurance poses no insurmountable problems, but health insurance would, because of the mobility of the workers, have to be offered either on a regional group plan or individual basis.

Employment Opportunities:

Greatest concern should not be directed toward employment problems of the coming season, since the only intervention methods available are those used in the past. It is known the rate of unemployment is far greater in rural areas than in urban areas during most of the year. Agricultural mechanization is increasing and will continue to increase until further mechanization is no longer economically rewarding. Increased

mechanization not only decreases the number of jobs available, but changes the type of jobs drastically. The current trend is toward mechanical harvesting of more crops and an increase in the number of central sorting and grading facilities. The development recently announced, of a 'pre-processing' system that will allow prolonged bulk storage of harvested crops also has many implications for employment, since the system will certainly be adopted on a broad scale (17).

These trends give every indication of a gross change in employment patterns. Increased mechanical harvesting and centralized sorting rapidly will increase job opportunities for women, while decreasing those for men, and will increase the level of skill required for most jobs. If these trends in employment continue, it is possible that within five to ten years the women employed in agriculture could outnumber men by four to one or even more.

Since the majority of farm workers are products of a Mexican paternalistic society, such a development would create a social problem that would be extremely difficult to solve. Alternatives open to the Mexican farm worker appear to be: 1) to change family living patterns and culture completely with women being primary wage earners, or 2) to leave rural areas in an attempt to seek employment that would not dictate this radical change in life style.

Education and the Mexican-American

A hue and cry has been raised in the past few years about the problems that Mexican and Mexican-American children face in the Anglo middle-class public schools. Although the problems pointed out are very real and the criticisms leveled are legitimate, the time and effort expended toward solving the problems are a mere pittance compared with the

scope and nature of the problems.

Educational research has shown consistently that, on the average, Mexican-American students score lower than Anglos. A number of studies using the Stanford-Binet Intelligence Test have shown the average IQ score of Mexican-Americans to be around 80. On this basis, many educators have assumed arbitrarily that these children have poor scholastic ability (6, 7, 9). The fallacy in such assumptions is that these tests do not consider language problems, different value systems (especially time values), and different norms for predominantly white middle-class children. These criticisms are reinforced by a recent study exploring the relationship between IQ scores and learning abilities. This study showed that IQ tests did a good job of differentiating between Anglo students of high and low ability, but not Mexican-American students (10).

The Mexican-American student is also characterized as being a low achiever in a public-school situation. Research to date indicates that the primary contributing factor is probably the conflict in cultural values. Examples of such conflicts include: 1) reluctance to compete with others; 2) an intense desire to avoid public shame; 3) a differing time orientation; and 4) a fatalistic view toward life, resulting in a lack of felt personal responsibility (13, 14, 16, 5). In addition, Anglos and Mexican-Americans differ in attitudes toward the value of education. Mexican-American students are more likely to feel that elementary school is unimportant, that the school staff is unfriendly and/or uninterested in them, that regular attendance is unimportant, and that there are advantages in dropping out (8). Although these attitudes are more evident in poorer homes and among students with lower achievement and intelligence levels, current research indicates such attitudes are more prevalent among all Mexican-American

students than most educators wish to believe.

Although formal education is highly valued by Mexican-American adults, and parents express the hope that all of their children will graduate from high school, they will not hesitate to take their children from school when an emergency occurs. A study of migrant farm workers in California's Central Valley in 1966 and 1967 showed this to be particularly true of these families. Over two-thirds wanted their children to finish high school. Nevertheless, over one-half of that number said they did not think it would be possible for their children. The majority of these parents had started working in the fields before they were eighteen and four-fifths of their children between the ages of 12 and 17 were in farm labor, along with one-eighth of their siblings between eight and twelve (1). These findings substantiate the parents' belief that few of their children would be able to complete high school unless the family living patterns were drastically altered.

No material dealing explicitly with the occupational aspirations of Mexican-American children could be found. However, studies in this area show adults are more likely to express their own aspirations in terms of a comfortable income and security, rather than in terms of wealth and position (14). Many express the feeling that the agricultural work in which they are involved is demeaning and hope to acquire a skilled job or a small private business (13, 19). One study indicated that although only one-tenth of the sample wanted their children to become farm workers, over one-third of the same sample believed children between seven and twelve should work in the fields with their parents. About one-third of this sample said they wanted their children to have a job classified as skilled, semi-skilled, or professional; one-fifth said the child should choose his own occupation; and another one-fifth indicated that they didn't care

what kind of work their children did as long as it was 'clean' (1). Again, there are strong indications that despite the parents' aspirations for their children, the facts of their life and environment do not offer great hope of these aspirations being realized within the current generation.

Can Education Provide The Solutions?

This question can be answered either yes or no. It is yes if one is thinking in terms of academic deficiencies of school-age and preschool children, of raising the literacy level, and of providing skill training for adult farm workers. If, however, one is thinking of those factors plus adequate in-service training for professionals, development and training of a cadre of para-professionals, and changing the attitudes of the majority society toward farm workers from aloofness and indifference to awareness and honest concern, one must say, "no; existing systems of education cannot provide all the solutions."

Research findings and information from public and private agencies working with farm workers point out educational and social deficiencies in terms of standards set by the majority society. From this information, education has been able to design programs directed toward overcoming such deficiencies from a purely technical point of view. Little has been done, however, to attempt to design programs to resolve the social issues at the very roots of the deficiencies. It has been too easy to say, "They are behind because of environment, culture, etc.," rather than ask, "What can be done about that environment? What aspects of their culture should be used as a foundation upon which to build remedial programs? And what is wrong with our culture that will allow these inequities to exist?"

Used as bases for the formulation of several remedial programs have been facts such as educational level of parents, parent's income, parent's work patterns, attitudes of parents toward education, achievement patterns of children in school, and the ability of children of minority groups to function in a school situation. These programs include Headstart and related preschool programs, basic education for adults, skill training programs for adults, and more recently, the development of programs to help minority school-age children 'close the gap' between themselves and middle-class children.

It appears that even more emphasis will be placed on these particular types of programs for minority groups in the future. It also seems reasonable to expect an increased emphasis on 'English as a Second Language' programs for children and adults, on money management and consumer education programs for adults, as well as on programs designed to help poor rural families gain the skills necessary for reasonably successful urban living and develop nonagricultural skills.

Assuming the above programs will be effective in meeting their stated objectives, what then? Will the total situation be much different from what it is now? If remedial programs are successful in helping farm workers' children function successfully in the classroom, if farm workers and their families master English, if they develop new skills and are employed, if they learn to live in an urban setting, nevertheless it is unlikely all of their problems will be solved. These people will still be labeled 'minorities' because of their racial and occupational backgrounds, just the same as many 'dust bowl' emigrants are still referred to as "Okies", as though they were carriers of some dreaded malady. In other words, the situation of the fragmented "them" and "us" will continue to

exist rather than the needed, unified "us" or "we".

Probably the greatest need in preschool and early-elementary-school programs is sound, innovative experiences that teach social awareness and help the children develop understanding and appreciation for the values of cultures other than their own. If such programs can be successfully built into early school experiences and extended into later school years, it would appear there is hope for the future.

But what of today? What of the older youth and adults who are in power positions now or soon will be? If we have any hope of starting real resolution of these social problems before those discussed in the preceding paragraph come into influence, a great deal of effort must be expended in developing and implementing <u>remedial</u> programs directed toward creating social awareness and understanding in the older youth and adults of the middle-class. Granted, this is an extremely large order, because with persons of this age the values and attitudes are much more firmly entrenched and less flexible than in young children.

In summary, this paper was not written to condemn existing remedial programs for minority groups or those that will come into being, but to emphasize that solving the problems of the farm worker requires <u>remedial</u> programs designed for members of the majority society, especially today's older youth and adults. If education is unable to devise such programs, this country will continue to fumble from one crisis and confrontation to the next, making no progress in curing its social ills.

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